

Minutes of 16 April 2007  
Circulated 17 April 2007  
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Approved 14 May 2007

THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN  
SENATE ASSEMBLY MEETING  
16 APRIL 2007

**Present:** Abdo, Albers, Aller, Altschuler, Anspach, Becker, Benamou, Boxer, Brown, Combi, Eagle, Engsminger, Fitzgerald, Fraser, Frier, Frost, Garton, George, Green, Gull, Hollar, Im, Ketefian, Kim, Koopman, Lachance, Li, Lomax, Luera, MacAdam, Mahalingam, Maybaum, Meerkov, Moore, Peters, Potter, Powell, Rothman, Sabel, Seabury, Smith (Chair), Stark, Thornton, Thouless, Wakefield; Lehman (Secretary of Senate Assembly)

**Alternates:** Dowling (Engineering-for Schultz), Franzese (LSA-for Lange), Simpson (Medicine-for Brock), Tucker (Social Work-for Reisch).

**Requested Alternate, none available:** Brophy (Business), Luera ((Dearborn-Edu), Maddock (LSA-Nat Sci), Volling (LSA-Soc Sci).

**Absent:** Adriaens, Agrawal, Annich, Avi-Yonah, Bastedo, Brown, Carson, Chang, Currie, Fricke, Giordani, Graham-Bermann, Hahn, Hesseltine, Kosch, Li, Ludlow, Navvab, Neuman, Primus, Rahme, Riles, Roe, Samson, Schultz, Sellers, Severance, Stoolman, Streetman, Younger

#### MATERIALS DISTRIBUTED

1. Senate Assembly agenda
2. Draft minutes of the Senate Assembly meeting of 19 March 2007
3. AAAC “[Report on a More Flexible Tenure](#)” endorsed by SACUA on 9 April 2007.
4. AAAC “[Faculty Response to the 2006 DoE report 'A Test of Leadership: Charting the Future of U.S. Higher Education', aka the Spellings Report](#)” endorsed by SACUA on 9 April 2007.
5. AAAC Endorsed “[Policies for Final Exams](#)”, dated 11 April 2007.

The meeting was convened by Chair Smith at 3:15 P.M. The draft agenda was approved.

#### CONSIDERATION OF MINUTES

The minutes of 19 March 2007 were approved as submitted.

#### ANNOUNCEMENTS

1. Professor Mary Steinhardt from UT-Austin will deliver the keynote talk at a forum about grievance procedures at noon on 10 May at the Michigan League. The title of her talk is “How we fixed the grievance procedures at UT Austin.” The forum is co-sponsored by SACUA, AAUP, and the office of the Provost.

2. Four new members of SACUA have been elected by the Assembly; they are R. Fraser, R. Friedman, W. Stark, and M. Thouless. They will be replacing Professors Combi, Giordani, Meerkov, and Seabury.
3. Monday, 14 May will be the final meeting of Senate Assembly. The meeting will feature a presentation and Q&A session with Athletic Director Martin. The Board of Regents will be asked to approve the budget for stadium renovation around that time, so questions on the topic would be appropriate. Assembly members are invited to submit questions to the Chair in advance of the meeting. Additional agenda topics for the May meeting will be (1) a report of CESF, previewing its required June report to the Board of Regents, (2) a report from the Budget Study Committee analyzing the rates of growth of salaries in different employment categories, and (3) the annual year-end report from the Chair on the status of Assembly business.

#### SUSPENSION OF ASSEMBLY RULE

Barbara MacAdam reported that SACUA has re-elected Chair Smith for 2007-2008, and elected Professor Potter as vice-chair. However, she said, the Senate Assembly has a standing rule prohibiting a chair from serving two consecutive terms. Owing to the facts that the vote by SACUA was unanimous, and that the Assembly has suspended its rule in the past, there is precedent for asking the Assembly to do so once again.

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#### ACTION OF SENATE ASSEMBLY SA041607-1

Professor MacAdam moved that the Senate Assembly suspends its rule prohibiting a chair from serving two consecutive terms for the year 2007-2008 (multiple seconds).

The Action was approved by unanimous vote with no abstentions of record.

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#### AAAC REPORT

Chair Smith yielded the floor to Professor Lehman, chair of the AAAC, at 3:25 P.M. Professor Lehman reviewed the composition and operation of the committee.

#### AAAC Charge and Function

- Mandated by Regents' Bylaw 4.06
- Advisory to the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs
- Identifies, advises, and consults on academic issues of importance to the entire University in conjunction with SACUA and Senate Assembly

#### AAAC General Operation

- Full committee meets biweekly for 1.5 hours, and typically meets with the provost monthly for 1 hour.
- Committee activity is aimed at producing Advisory Actions and Advisory Reports.
- Reports are developed in subcommittee and are brought to full committee for endorsement/approval.

#### AAAC Agenda Topics

- First two meetings in September 2006 were used to construct a list of potential agenda topics and set priorities by vote.
- Accept charges from SACUA and the Senate Assembly as they arise.
- Respond to requests made by the provost as they arise.

#### AAAC Accomplishments 2006-07

- Reform student registration brackets<sup>1</sup>
- Institute policy to notify faculty when student grades are changed retroactively<sup>1</sup>
- Advisory Report: Faculty response to McDonald-Weiss Committee proposal to extend the tenure probationary period<sup>2</sup>
- Advisory Report: Faculty response to the Spellings Commission (DoE) Report on undergraduate education<sup>3</sup>
- Advisory Policy regarding scheduling for final examinations<sup>3</sup>
- On-line archive of AAAC minutes (1999 to current) searchable by topic<sup>1</sup>
- Liaison to task force: textbook reporting<sup>3</sup>
- Liaison to task force: on-line course evaluations and placement exams<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>AAAC-initiated      <sup>2</sup>SACUA-initiated      <sup>3</sup>Provost-initiated

#### AAAC Unfinished Business

- Statistical analysis of undergraduate admissions data/academic outcomes (AAAC-initiated)
- Faculty advice and oversight of tenure decisions and revocation of tenure at level of Provost (AAAC-initiated)
- Status and funding for Summer Bridge Programs (AAAC-initiated)
- Status and funding for Study Abroad Programs (AAAC-initiated)

#### AAAC Action Items for Senate Assembly

- Endorse report: Faculty response to revised McDonald-Weiss report
- Endorse report: Faculty response to Spellings Commission report
- Endorse policy statement regarding final examination scheduling

#### AAAC Items for Information

- Textbook reporting
- On-line course evaluations/placement exams

#### POLICY STATEMENT ON FINAL EXAMS

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##### ACTION OF SENATE ASSEMBLY SA041607-2

Professor Lehman asked for action on the policy statement regarding final examination scheduling (distributed item) that had been presented to the Assembly for vote. The Assembly discussed the statement as Committee of the Whole and amended it prior to vote. The final statement was as follows:

#### **Policies for Final Exams with Registrar-sanctioned dates**

Endorsed by AAAC 11 April 2007

Amended and Endorsed by SACUA 16 April 2007  
Amended, Approved, and Endorsed by Senate Assembly 16 April 2007

1. Information about the registrar-sanctioned dates for final exams should be made more accessible for instructors and students. The information should be an integral part of the class-rosters for instructors and class schedules for students.
2. Changes from these dates should only be made with the agreement of the registrar and the instructor teaching the course. The class-rosters and class schedules should be updated by the registrar's office with this new information. The changes must accommodate all students in a class, with a suitable alternative being provided for students who have a compelling reason for being unable to take the exam on the new date. The original registrar-sanctioned date provides a default, if no other mutually satisfactory date can be found.
3. The dates of final exams must be finalized by the instructor, approved by the registrar, if they need to be changed, and published by the end of the first week of classes. Students must notify the instructor of any conflict with the date of an exam by the Drop/Add deadline for each semester.
4. Exams outside of the class period cannot be given in the last week of classes.
5. Final projects or take-home exams for undergraduate classes that have a due date during the last week of classes or during the finals period must be given to students at least one week in advance of the due date. This policy would allow students to accommodate the possibility of multiple deadlines in a short period of time. The policy should also be encouraged for graduate classes.
6. Students should not be allowed to enroll in courses that have final exams formally scheduled at the same date and time without permission of instructors in the affected courses.

Vote on the Active Motion:

The Action was approved by unanimous vote with one abstention of record.

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**FACULTY RESPONSE TO McDONALD-WEISS REPORT ON EXTENDING THE TENURE PROBATIONARY PERIOD**

Professor Lehman yielded the floor to Professor Potter at 4:00 P.M. to lead discussion of a report responding to the revised McDonald-Weiss Report (distributed item). Professor Potter reviewed the key findings and recommendations expressed in the Faculty Response report. He stated that all committee members agree that flexibility is important, and that there is sufficient flexibility in the present system. He noted that the M-W report was not data-driven, whereas the data present in the Lee-Smith report demonstrate there is, objectively, no problem. Moreover, Professor Potter stated that analysis of tenure rates at Michigan with those of peer universities indicates that the U-M is firmly in the middle of the range.

Professor Ketefian asked why in its revision the M-W committee did not respond to the objections expressed by the Senate Assembly. Professor Potter replied that he did not have sufficient knowledge to answer the question. A member of the Assembly expressed concern that the need to seek exception in order to extend the probationary period within the existing policy creates a stigma. He suggested that extending probation to 10 years as the M-W report advocates would eliminate the need to seek exception in cases of illness, child-bearing, or other reasons. Professor Allers reported that the faculty of the Medical School voted by referendum to extend the probationary period to 10 years. He noted that the needs of the Medical School and the Dental School may be different from those of the other units. Professor Potter responded that the AAAC and SACUA are convinced that adequate flexibility exists under the current policy, and that changing that policy could create a variety of negative unintended consequences.

Professor Potter returned the floor to Professor Lehman, who ascertained by show of hands that the Assembly was ready to vote.

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#### ACTION OF SENATE ASSEMBLY SA041607-3

The Senate Assembly approves and endorses the Faculty Response to the McDonald-Weiss Report on extending the maximum probationary period for tenure, dated April 2007.

Vote on the Active Motion:

Number approving: 27

Number disapproving- 6

Number abstaining- 5

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#### FACULTY RESPONSE TO SPELLINGS COMMISSION REPORT

Professor van der Pluijm took the podium at 4:20 P.M. to lead discussion of the report (distributed item). Professor van der Pluijm reviewed the rationales and recommendations expressed in the Faculty Response report using a PowerPoint presentation. A pdf file of the presentation slides is included as an appendix with these minutes. He concluded his prepared remarks at 4:35 P.M.

Professor Emeritus Brown said that he agreed completely with the recommendations of the report, but that it duplicated recommendations that were made back in 1951. Professor van der Pluijm allowed that there was an element of reinventing the wheel in the recommendations, but that the wheel had perhaps come off the cart in the intervening years. Professor Abdo asked whether the Spellings report addressed class sizes and related effects on undergraduate education. Professor van der Pluijm said that it did not, and in general did not delve deeply into details.

Professor van der Pluijm ascertained by show of hands that the Assembly was ready to vote.

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#### ACTION OF SENATE ASSEMBLY 041607-4

The Senate Assembly approves and endorses the Faculty Response to the Spellings Commission Report.

Vote on the Active Motion:

Number approving- 33

Number disapproving- 1

Number abstaining- 2

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## ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

### **On-line Course Instructor Evaluations and On-line Placement Examinations**

At 4:42 P.M. Professor Thouless took the podium. He characterized his presence on a task force developed within the provost's office as the token regular tenure-track faculty member. He said the notion behind a seemingly inevitable move away from paper evaluations to electronic ones appears to be: (i) "the web is good - do everything on the web;" (ii) economies may be achieved by reduced processing costs, off-setting initial development costs; and (iii) students might be more easily identified by their hand-writing than by their on-line writing style.

Professor Thouless said that the new system will need safeguards to ensure that the identities of the student respondents are not accessible to anyone, including staff, faculty, chairs and deans. He said that written comments must be purged from servers to provide protection against the chance that groups may seek the free-format and often personal comments written by students about instructors through FOIA and then represent them publicly as U-M sanctioned reviews. He said that while it is not obvious that written comments should go to anyone but the course instructor, the faculty in the individual units should decide who has access to the comments. He noted that pilot studies suggest that student participation rates could be as high on-line as on paper, but that results vary with academic culture. They were higher in a pilot scheme in engineering than in sociology. He said that he strongly opposed any suggestion that student participation should be driven by sanction or reward. In particular, blocking registration for failure to participate would be tantamount to adding a new graduation requirement.

Professor Thouless said that pilot studies suggest that median scores can drop by about 0.2 points using on-line evaluation. He said that the true precision of the scores is probably about 0.5, but there appears to be an institutional tendency to over-state the precision of the scores. He noted that the use of cell phones or wireless technology could potentially make it possible to have the evaluations administered in class.

Regarding placement exams, Professor Thouless stated that the motivation to move to the web appears to be time constraints during orientation. Unproctored web-based placement exams are probably fine provided the result of cheating would be merely that a student would enter an inappropriate course. Unproctored web-based placement exams should not be used to grant academic credit or relief from a graduation requirement. He remarked that one unintended consequence of shifting from paper exams to on-line ones would be that the test-taking strategies that are currently taught in the schools would be ineffective. Finally, he observed that the development of pedagogically-sound tests will take resources, and savings from identifiable budget-line

items should not be shifted to the nominally infinite resource of faculty time.

### **On-line Textbook Reporting**

At 4:50 P.M. Professor Koopmann reported on an effort to improve timeliness of notice to students about required textbooks. He explained that he serves on a task force appointed by the provost, and that the group recommends that the reporting system be web-based. The idea is to notify students sooner, so that they can shop on line and perhaps realize savings. He noted that comparisons revealed that the U-M is low in rank compared to peer institutions with respect to time that students are notified. He noted that the Student Affairs Advisory Committee, advisory to the vice president for student affairs, has endorsed the report. He said that the report has subsequently been shared with the provost's office. Professor Koopmann concluded his report at 4:54 P.M.

### **UNDERGRADUATE SCHOLARSHIP FUND**

Chair Smith announced that all faculty will soon receive a letter inviting participation in the undergraduate scholarship fund created by the Senate Assembly.

### **OLD/NEW BUSINESS**

Professor Abdo commented that her review of SACUA minutes informed her about SACUA's recent visitors on the topic of student mental health. She asked how many visits CAPS provides the students that it sees. The chair replied that he did not know, but that the dialog about mental health issues was a continuing one.

There was no other business.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:56 P.M.

Respectfully submitted

John T. Lehman  
Senate Secretary

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### **University of Michigan Bylaws of the Board of Regents, Sec. 5.02:**

#### *Governing Bodies in Schools and Colleges*

In each school, college, or degree granting division of the University, including those at the University of Michigan-Dearborn and at the University of Michigan-Flint, the governing faculty shall be in charge of the affairs of the school, college, or division, except as delegated to the executive committee, if any, and except that in the School of Graduate Studies the governing board shall be the executive board, and in the Medical School shall be the executive faculty.

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